



OFFICE OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

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Linda McCulloch
Superintendent

November 1, 2004

To: OPI MASS Representatives

From: Madalyn Quinlan, Chief of Staff

Subject: Summary of OPI Activities for November 2004

Here is a summary of the current activities at the Office of Public Instruction for November 2004. This summary can also be found at www.opi.state.mt.us/MassUpdates.

Office of the State Superintendent

Highlights of State Superintendent Linda McCulloch's Activities for October 2004:

- Welcomed new and returning members of the Special Education Advisory Board to their fall meeting
- Visited schools in Missoula as part of her Yellow School Bus Tour
- Attended the monthly Ed Forum meeting, OPI Cabinet meeting and State Land Board meeting
- Introduced the Kind Acts Foundation program at Central Elementary School in Helena
- Welcomed participants to the annual Montana Educators Forum in Helena
- Spoke at the Teacher of the Year reception
- Welcomed participants to the Montana Reading Council Conference, attended/spoke at the MCEL conference, Billings and the MEA-MFT Conference, Helena.
- Met with the Governor's Budget Director on OPI's agency budget for the 2007 Biennium
- Announced the Milken Award Winners for 2004:
 - Sidney: Vicky Panasuk, Sidney Elementary School
 - Bozeman: Kathleen Dirby, Anderson Elementary School District
- Announced with Attorney General Mike McGrath the receipt of \$65,000 from the Department of Justice to OPI to be used in schools on meth prevention programs.
- Attended a reception for Karen Strege, retiring Montana State Librarian.
- Spoke to members of Hometown Helena.
- Along with OPI staff, greeted students at Helena Middle School as part of their "Safe and Drug Free Schools" program.
- Hosted OPI's 2-day *Indian Education Summit: A Call to Action*, held in Helena
- Welcomed attendees from across the country for the annual convention of the Association of Education Federal Finance Administrators held in Whitefish.
- Presented stipends to recipients of the National Board Certification.
- Publicly launched the Parents Page on OPI's website.
- Completed a variety of media interviews.
- Attended oral arguments to the Montana Supreme Court in the School Funding lawsuit.

Indian Education for All Summit

The October 2004 Indian Education Summit - A Call to Action, hosted by the Office of Public Instruction, brought together nearly 200 educators and community leaders to help the State Superintendent develop an action plan. The Summit had two goals:

- To seek input on how to implement Indian Education for All
- To eliminate the American Indian student achievement gap

Attendees were divided into five groups: 1) Education System Structure, 2) Indian Education for All, 3) Dropout and Retention, 4) Educational Leadership, and 5) Improving Achievement. The groups developed objectives and strategies that were presented to Linda McCulloch at the conclusion of the summit.

State Superintendent Linda McCulloch stated "The challenges facing American Indian students in Montana must be addressed. I am thankful for the participants' willingness to share their expertise and ideas on how we can close the achievement gap for American Indian students and ensure that all schools can successfully implement Indian Education for All."

The OPI is updating its Indian Education for All website and creating a listserv to keep everyone updated on the summit outcomes. If you have questions about the Indian Education Summit, please contact Everall Fox at 444-3013 or efox@state.mt.us.

OPI Creates Webpage for Parents

Parents are their children's first and most important teacher. For Montana's children to be successful students, a strong school and family partnership is essential. The OPI Parents Page was created to help parents more easily find information about K-12 public education in Montana. The evidence is clear, family involvement in schools matters. And the OPI Parents webpage helps communicate with parents about public education in Montana.

The types of information available to parents on the OPI website are: Getting Started in school; Special Needs resources and organizations; Health and safety; No Child Left Behind guide parents on the Federal law and Montana implementation; Testing guidelines; Reading resources and tips; Homework help; and Career and College links to Montana and national resources. The purpose of this website is to be responsive to the issues that are important to parents and their students. Superintendent Linda McCulloch asks for suggestions, if you don't find what you need. OPI Contact: Jan Lombardi 444-1641 or jlombardi@state.mt.us.

OPI's Yellow School Bus Tours done for 2004

Superintendent Linda McCulloch and her staff had a busy fall visiting schools as part of OPI's Yellow School Bus Tour. During September OPI staff visited schools in Great Falls, Laurel, Red Lodge, Billings and Hardin, and in October headed to Missoula for the day. Since 2002, half of OPI staff's has traveled on one of 13 tours covering more than 5100 miles across Montana to visit 29 cities and 98 schools.

The purpose of the Yellow School Bus Tour is to listen and learn about the challenges and successes in Montana schools. If you would like your schools to be a part of the Yellow School Bus Tour in 2005, contact OPI Tour Coordinator: Jan Lombardi at jlombardi@state.mt.us, 444-1641 or the OPI website at <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/YellowBusTour/index.html>.

Kind Acts Foundation Offers Montana Teachers A Way to Honor Kids

Teachers can recognize students for acts of kindness in many ways. Now, thanks to a Kind Acts program being piloted in Montana and Utah this year, there is another. The Kind Acts Foundation, www.KindActs.org, offers K-12 teachers a simple and easy way to formally honor kids for kind deeds. The foundation sends a personalized certificate detailing the child's kind act

along with a Kind Acts lapel pin to any teacher making a request at their site. The teacher decides how to present the certificate and pin to the student. Since the Kind Acts Foundation is privately funded, there is no cost, and all teacher requests are filled. Students are demonstrating kindness in schools all across Montana; and State Superintendent Linda McCulloch encourages teachers to take advantage of the Kind Acts program.

OPI contact: Jan Lombardi 444-1641 or jlombardi@state.mt.us.

Kind Acts Foundation contact: Dave Hall, Director, 801-583-2303, DaveHall@KindActs.org.

November Board of Public Education Meeting Topics

The Board of Public Education will hold its next regular meeting in Helena November 4-5, 2004, at the Board of Investments building, 2401 Colonial Drive, third floor. Agenda items from the Office of Public Instruction include the following information items: The Superintendent's Report, a No Child Left Behind Update, the Annual Renewal Units Report, and a License Surrender report. Action items include Accreditation issues. Contacts are Board of Public Education Executive Secretary Steve Meloy (406) 444-0300 or Deputy Superintendent Bud Williams (406) 444-7325.

Education Licensure

The Office of Public Instruction received national recognition in the May/June 2004 issue of Teacher's Magazine in regard to their on-line renewal process. This site gives educators the capability to renew their certificates online. All an educator has to do is log on, fill out a form, pay a fee and then print the new certification and in a few minutes everything is done. The addition of this site has helped to reduce the number of phone calls the Educator Licensure Unit receives on a daily basis and made the renewal process much easier for educators and administrators in Montana. To access the site, go to:
<https://app.discoveringmontana.com/tcert/main.php>

While it isn't necessary for the educator to mail anything to OPI when they complete their online renewal, OPI does conduct an audit of renewals beginning in January of each year. It is the educator's responsibility to maintain the original records of their renewal units and college credits so that if they are selected in our random audit, they can produce the required documentation.

In addition, any educator can go on-line and check their credentials and status of their renewal request. To access the site, go to: <http://data.opi.state.mt.us/EdCredentials/Index.asp>.

Educators whose license expires June 30, 2005 will be able to begin using the online renewal option after January 1, 2005. OPI Contact: Elizabeth Keller, 444-2580 or ekeller@state.mt.us.

Assessment

The October 2004 issue of **JUMP, the OPI online assessment newsletter**, is online at <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/PDF/Assessment/NewsLetters/Oct04AssessNews.pdf>. The October edition contains information regarding the standard setting process for the Measured Progress CRT and CRT-Alternate, determination of cut scores for proficiency levels, timelines for release of Adequate Yearly Progress determinations, preparations for the administration of the 2005 CRT, and the same information regarding Adequate Yearly Progress that is included below.

OPI is preparing and posting responses to Frequently Asked Questions about assessment and Adequate Yearly Progress on the OPI web site, www.opi.state.mt.us, under the Get Answers tab on the home page.

OPI Contact: Judy Snow, 444-3656, or jsnow@state.mt.us.

2005 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Activities

NAEP also known as the "Nation's Report Card," is the only national representative assessment identifying what America's students know and can do in school in a variety of key subject areas. NAEP assessment activities are currently underway in Montana for schools randomly selected in the fourth, eighth, and twelfth grades in reading, mathematics and science. Montana has a large sample this year with over 460 classes included. Schools selected are currently submitting student demographic lists electronically with the deadline date of November 10 for all list submissions.

While NAEP field teams administer the assessment, school coordinators are needed to provide the student demographic lists, schedule the assessment, inform parents and distribute and collect survey questionnaires for teachers and principals.

To find out more about this assessment you can access the NAEP web site at <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard> or contact Donna O'Neill, NAEP State Administrator at doneill@state.mt.us or call (406) 444-0793.

Adequate Yearly Progress

2004 Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) Starting Points

Starting points for the 2004 AYP have been calculated through a formula specified by the No Child Left Behind Act. A starting point is the percentage of students required to score at proficient or above on the 2004 Criterion-Referenced Test and Alternate. This percentage is required in order to meet the Annual Measurable Objective (AMO) for Adequate Yearly Progress.

- The starting point and the 2004 AMO for mathematics at all grade levels is 40% of students scoring proficient or above.
- The starting point and the 2004 AMO for reading at all grade levels is 55% of students scoring proficient or above.
- The starting points for the 2005 AYP have not been determined.

Minimum Number (N) for Adequate Yearly Progress Calculations

Following several months of negotiations with the U.S. Department of Education, an agreement has been reached concerning the minimum number (N) of students used in the Adequate Yearly Progress calculations required by the No Child Left Behind Act. The original request of the Office of Public Instruction was to use a minimum N of 40 for all subgroups, including the All Students Subgroup. The department has agreed to allow OPI to use a minimum N of 40 for subgroups, and 30 for the All Students Subgroup. In addition, a 95% confidence interval will be applied.

Small Schools Process

The No Child Left Behind Act requires that states make an AYP decision on all schools and districts. This is accomplished by using either a calculated, formula-driven process or a small schools process, depending on the number of students tested in each grade. The small schools process encompasses a variety of measures that will include a review of the current CRT data,

a historical review of applicable IOWA test data, and a historical review of attendance and graduation data. Finally, if applicable, it will also encompass a review of achievement “growth” for the past two years and a review of the Five-Year Comprehensive Plan current year’s effectiveness reports.

For 2004 AYP, if a tested grade has 30 or fewer students, that school will be reviewed under the small schools process. It is projected that approximately 502 schools and 257 districts will be reviewed using the small schools process. As this represents a much larger and more varied group of schools and districts as compared to 2003, OPI staff and representatives from our various education partners have redesigned the process. A more detailed description of the process and copies of the review rubric will be posted on the OPI website when they are complete.

As in 2003, the small school reviews will be conducted using teams of OPI staff and Montana educators. These teams will meet in Helena on November 18 and 19 to complete the process. If you are interested in participating in this review process, contact Margaret Bowles, mbowles@state.mt.us or 406-444-0716.

Measurement and Accountability

The 2004 version of the *Facts About Montana Education* is now available on-line <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/pdf/measurement/edfacts2004.pdf>. This is a quick reference for general information about school size and enrollment; numbers of schools, districts and certified staff; students/teacher ratios; revenues and expenditures per pupil; assessment results; and graduation rates.

OPI Contact: Andy Boehm, Research Specialist, (406)444-0375, or aboehm@state.mt.us

School Budgeting and Accounting

Preliminary Maintenance of Effort and Special Education Reversion Reports Posted

In late November, OPI will e-mail a notice to all districts and special education cooperatives regarding maintenance of effort (MOE) for ESEA Title programs, IDEA Part B and Preschool special education grants, Career and Technical Education expenditures, and the state special education allowable cost funding reversion. All district and special education cooperative clerks, district superintendents, special education directors, and county superintendents should review the information carefully. This process will require your immediate attention to correct any reporting errors on the FY2004-05 Trustees' Financial Summary (TFS) that might have caused MOE or reversion problems. The deadline for corrections is December 20, so prompt action is critical. OPI Contact: Jim Oberembt, 444-1257 or joberembt@state.mt.us.

Budget Amendments for Unusual Enrollment Increases

If the October 4, 2004 enrollment count exceeds the enrollment for last year, trustees might want to consider processing a budget amendment. Additional state funding is generally available for an enrollment increase that exceeds 6% of the last year's average enrollment. OPI offers a budget amendment packet to help you with the process:

<http://www.opi.state.mt.us/pdf/schoolfinance/forms/2002bapacket.pdf>. OPI Contact: Mike Waterman, (406) 444-4524, or mwaterman@state.mt.us.

Central Grant Files Required

OPI policy requires that each district must maintain a central grant file in the business office for audit purposes. For each grant project, the file must contain the grant application; grant award

document; approved grant budget; cash request form(s); record of cash receipts; record of matching expenditures, if required; budget modification forms, if any are filed; any significant correspondence; final reporting and closeout documents. The grant's authorized representative, who is normally the district superintendent, should file copies of all grant documents with the clerk of the district to ensure compliance.

OPI has a standard form called the "Federal/State Grant Control Record" that can be used as a cover page for each grant file. For a copy, see the OPI State and Federal Grants Handbook, Appendix B-1, number 5. The page is available under "Grant Control Record" on the School Finance Webpage: http://www.opi.state.mt.us/pdf/schoolfinance/forms/gcrecord6_02.pdf. OPI Contact: Joan Anderson, (406) 444-1960 or janderson@state.mt.us.

November 10th Deadline for Closing Grants

Districts must submit Fiscal Close-Out Reports and Final Program Reports for grants that ended September 30, 2004 to OPI by 5 p.m. November 10, 2004. OPI's grant policies prohibit OPI from paying grant cash if the district does not request it on or before the November 10 deadline. Reimbursements requested on late fiscal close-out reports will not be paid. Please submit grant close-out reports on time to avoid loss of eligibility for funding.

For a list of grants that closed September 30, see Section 100-5 of the OPI State and Federal Grants Handbook. For a copy of the standard fiscal close-out form for OPI grants, see <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/pdf/FEDPrgms/FsclClosout.pdf>. OPI Contact: Joan Anderson, (406) 444-1960 or janderson@state.mt.us.

New Clerk Training Scheduled for November

The Montana Association of School Business Officials (MASBO) will hold a training session for new district clerks on November 16 and 17, 2004, in Helena. Any interested clerks, superintendents, or county superintendents are encouraged to attend. There is a charge for the workshop. Contact: Lynda Brannon, Executive Director of MASBO, (406) 442-5599 or masbo@in-tch.com. Register online at: <http://www.masbo.com/New%20Clerk%20Brochure%20-%20Apr%2004.pdf>

School Block Grant to be Distributed in November

On November 22, 2004, OPI will distribute seventy percent (70%) of the State School Block Grant (Revenue code 3444) and the Combined School Block Grant (Revenue Code 3445) to districts. Payments amounts will match the anticipated revenues in each fund on the FY 2004-05 district budget forms. The remaining 30% will be paid in May 2005. Coops do not receive School Block Grants or Combined Block Grants. Contact Bonnie Maze, (406) 444-3249 or bmaze@state.mt.us.

Approved Bus Routes

Please remind bus drivers that buses must be driven on routes as approved by the county transportation committee. Routes must not be altered without the county transportation committee's approval. Running alternative routes without approval may result in state and county overpayments that are subject to refund. Altering routes might also expose the district to unnecessary liability risks. OPI contact: Maxine Mougeot, (406) 444-3096 or mmougeot@state.mt.us.

Information Services Division

OPI Video Conferencing Project

The video conferencing equipment has been installed at the Office of Public Instruction (OPI). The equipment will be used during the pilot project period which will run from October 2004-June 2005. During the pilot, OPI staff will provide a variety of training sessions and video conferences that will focus on pertinent topics ranging from local and state education issues to federal program requirements. Sessions may be scheduled for a single district or many districts.

Any district that has a VisionNet videoconference site is encouraged to participate in this pilot project. A Memorandum of Understanding that outlines the responsibilities of each district that wishes to participate will be mailed to the districts. A calendar of tentative events is posted on the OPI website at <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/calendar/calendar.php?calendar=4> in order to notify districts and individuals of upcoming videoconference topics, times and dates.

OPI Contact: Gale Kramlick, 444-4411, or gkramlick@state.mt.us.

The 1st Annual Montana Government Information Technology Conference will take place from Wednesday through Friday, December 1 -3, 2004 at the Red Lion Colonial Inn in Helena. The Montana Government Information Technology Conference has been developed to enable and foster the sharing of ideas, products, services and experiences. Don't miss your opportunity to take part in a great annual event.

Technology plays a crucial role in all our daily lives. This is especially true for Montana state government.

Most of us can remember the days before computers, e-mail, the Internet, cell phones and fax machines. The world has changed tremendously in the last 20 years, and the rate of change is accelerating. People's expectations have increased, and businesses have been required to change their ways of operating to survive. Businesses have adopted technology as a means of increasing worker productivity and improving customer service delivery.

For more information and to register for this event, please visit:
http://www.discoveringmontana.com/itsd/itgov04/itgov04_default.asp
OPI Contact: Gale Kramlick, 444-4411, or gkramlick@state.mt.us.

Accreditation Division

Educator Quality Specialist

Al Mc Milin recently accepted OPI's Educator Quality Specialist Position. This position administers Title II Part A – Statewide Activities to Improve Teacher and Principal Quality and Title II Part B – Math and Science Partnership (MSP) competitive grant program. A key focus of statewide activities under Part A over the next two years will be the development and awarding of grants to establish pilot projects for a regionalized delivery system for professional development in the state. It is believed these pilot projects will help provide direction for statewide framework for the systematic coordination of professional development efforts currently undertaken by OPI, curriculum consortiums, special education cooperatives, CSPD regions, and the state university system.

The Math and Science Partnership program was established under the recently reauthorized Elementary and Secondary Education Act to improve the academic achievement of students in the areas of math and science by encouraging State education agencies, institutions of higher

education, and local school districts to work together to develop and implement programs that improve math and science instruction. This past summer OPI awarded six two-year grants under this program totaling \$2.3 million dollars. All of these grants provide for a rich partnership between state university units and Montana school districts and present a variety of models for delivering quality, on-going and systemic professional development for math and science teachers across the state. Look for future articles on this exciting program and the development of an OPI webpage devoted to the projects' efforts and results.
OPI Contact: Al McMilin, 444-4436, amcmilin@state.mt.us.

Limited Number of Food for the Mind Kits Available

The Office of Public Instruction, in partnership with Montana State University-Bozeman Team Nutrition project, Eat Right Montana, and the Montana State Reading Council developed the Food for the Mind project for K-3 classrooms to promote reading between parents and children, using nutrition and physical activity as the topic areas. The project supports Superintendent McCulloch's reading initiative. It also supports the public health initiative to reduce childhood obesity. It also strives to engage parents with their children's school, and increases family knowledge about the importance of reading, healthy eating and physical activity. The kindergarten through grade three classroom boxes include two book bags, books on health, nutrition and fitness topics, a teacher booklet, two books for the teacher, and student consumable packages. A limited number of Food for the Mind classroom boxes are available on a first-come basis. For information or to register for the Food for the Mind project, please contact June Atkins, Literacy Specialist, (406) 444-3664 or e-mail, jatkins@state.mt.us or Monique Webb, project assistant, (406) 444-9864 or e-mail, mowebb@state.mt.us.

The **Presidential Freedom Scholarship** program, sponsored by the Corporation for National and Community Service, recognizes high school juniors and seniors for their outstanding leadership and commitment to community service with a \$1,000 scholarship for college. Each high school and Boys and Girls Club of America have the opportunity to select up to two recipients.

Administered by Learn and Serve America at the Corporation, the scholarship provides \$500 in Federal funds, matched with \$500 from a community organization or business obtained for the student by his or her high school or Boys and Girls Club. Winners must have completed at least 100 hours of community service, either through a school-based service-learning program or independently through service at a nonprofit or faith-based organization. The Presidential Freedom Scholarship is intended to reward and encourage service activities that have a significant impact in meeting the needs of local communities.

All high school guidance counselors will receive a booklet with application information and certification forms from the Corporation for National and Community Service in the winter of 2005. Only high school personnel can certify which two students from their school are selected to receive this national honor. Although the application packets and submission deadline for 2005 are not yet available, students can start the process contacting the guidance counselors about the program and the selection process and by documenting their service projects and hours in preparation for applying for the scholarship. For further information contact June Atkins at (406) 444-3664, E-mail jatkins@state.mt.us, or <http://www.nationalservice.org/scholarships/aboutstudents.html>.

Career, Technical and Adult Education Division

The **Montana Association for Career and Technical Education** (MT ACTE) held its annual conference in Helena on October 21 and 22. The conference featured excellent presentations, workshops and tours for the approximately 200 Montana career and technical educators in attendance. We offer our congratulations to all who were involved with organizing this successful conference.

Special Education Division

Montana's Office of Public Instruction has recently been awarded a general supervision enhancement grant through the U. S. Department of Education. The grant proposes to develop critical components of an infrastructure that will support a coordinated and comprehensive system of professional development, technical assistance, and information dissemination delivery. The system is designed to support the state, districts, and local entities in their efforts to improve student outcomes for all students.

The concept of creating a more comprehensive and integrated approach to professional development has been formulating in Montana for several years. On-going professional development is a critical aspect of all components of the educational process. The goal is to develop a system that is responsive to schools needs, coordinates delivery and resources, and consolidates the listing of professional development to improve access. This project will result in the creation of key foundational components for such a system to include:

- An analysis of how the OPI currently delivers professional development across all divisions and programs;
- An analysis of regional, district, and local entity professional development needs;
- A blueprint to incorporate the findings of the analyses into a more effective and efficient operation;
- Development of a comprehensive and searchable web-based listing of professional development opportunities state-wide;
- Improve the use of technologies in the delivery of professional development and;
- Promote collaborative relationships with key stakeholders on the Montana educational community

This is a one year grant and the grant award amount is \$412,000. OPI Contact: Dick Trerise, 444-1579, or dtrerise@state.mt.us.

Educational Opportunity and Equity Division

Automatic First Payment under Title I Part A

In August, OPI made an automatic first payment of Title I, Part A funds to eligible districts that submitted a 2005 ESEA Consolidated Application. Unique among OPI grants, Title I Part A generated a payment of 10 % of the final district allocation without the district requesting a cash payment. The remaining Title I Part A funds will have to be requested along with all other Title funds approved in the 2005 ESEA Consolidated Application.

Beginning in July 1, 2005, OPI will discontinue the automatic first payment for Title, I Part A funds. Instead, all projects will receive payments based on the standard cash request form. This process will then be consistent with the process for other OPI grants. Additional reminders will be sent in the Spring of 2005. OPI contact: Julia Dilly at 444-4523 or jdilly@state.mt.us.

7-12 Teachers Eligible for Presidential Award

Please nominate and encourage good grade 7-12 teachers who teach mathematics or science to apply for the Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching. This award was established in 1983 and is administered for the White House by the National Science Foundation. Teachers of grades 7-12 are eligible to apply for the 2005 award but may not be self-nominated. Anyone (e.g., principals, teachers, students, and other members of the general public) may nominate a teacher. Teachers' completed applications for the 2005 awards must be postmarked by May 2, 2005. Nomination forms, eligibility requirements and applications are available on the PAEMST Web site, <http://www.nsf.gov/pa>. OPI Contact Sharon Mikat, 406-444-0906 or smikat@state.mt.us.

The Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching (PAEMST) identifies outstanding mathematics and science teachers across the country from kindergarten through 12th grade. If chosen by the national selection committee, awardees receive a special citation signed by the President of the United States, a \$10,000 award from the National Science Foundation (NSF), gifts from donors, and a paid trip for two to Washington, D.C. in March to attend special recognition events.

Health Enhancement and Safety Division

Coordinated School Health Unit

School Discipline Data Collection

The School Discipline Data Collection application is currently available on the OPI Web page for ongoing data entry of incidents that occur throughout the year. A worksheet is now available for use by school districts that wish to write down the incidents before entering them into the application. The worksheet may be downloaded or printed from the following Web page: <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/Streamer/SchoolDiscipline/Index.html>

A step-by-step electronic data entry instructional CD is available for those school districts that are having problems accessing the instructional video from the Web page. To request a CD, call either Marion Erp at 444-1951 or Pat Reichert at 444-4430.

Any school district that is unable to access the Web must contact the OPI for alternate instructions on submitting school discipline data. Please contact either Marion Erp at 444-1951 or Pat Reichert at 444-4430.

What Schools Can Do in Light of the Flu Vaccine Shortage

CDC has prepared Q&As for schools as well as printable posters designed to be used in school and community settings that provide step by step instructions and illustrations on how to best cover your cough and wash your hands are available in English, Spanish, Vietnamese, Chinese, and Tagalog at: <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/school/index.htm>. Additionally, printable flyers with clear, concise messages describing who should be vaccinated and other ways to prevent the flu are available at: <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/flugallery/index.htm>. For more information about the flu and this year's recommendations, visit the CDC Web site: <http://www.cdc.gov/flu>. You can also ask your healthcare provider or call the CDC Hotline: 1-800-CDC-INFO (4636).

Threat Assessment and Crisis Planning Resources

The U.S. Department of Education's (USDE) Safe and Drug-Free Schools program has provided a guidance letter to OPI for all schools regarding terrorist attacks on schools. The letter sets forth specific short-term and long-term protective measures for schools. Included with the guidance letter is a list of resources designed to help schools with crisis planning, threat

assessment, and protective and preventive measures as well as information on how to deal with trauma in the school and community. The resource list concludes with information on grants available from the USDE for emergency response and crisis management.

To access the guidance letter and list of resources, go to OPI's home page at www.opi.state.mt.us, then under Programs and Services scroll down to "Safe and Drug-Free Schools." Select that and then open the drop down menu under the heading "Crisis Issues." Find and select "Emergency Resources for Schools." The letter and guidance will open. The direct link to the guidance letter is www.opi.state.mt.us/pdf/safeschools/Beslanltr100604.pdf. OPI Contact: Cathy Kendall, SDFS Program Director, 444-0829 or cakendall@state.mt.us.

Team Up for School Safety and to Stop Bullying

National PTA is collaborating with National Crime Prevention Council on the Be Safe and Sound campaign, a program that encourages parents to partner with school administrators to ensure the safety and security of their children while at school. The goal of Be Safe and Sound is to engage and educate parents, policy makers, school officials, community members, and students and to provide them with expert-based school safety and security principles.

NCPC has created a toolkit to assist parents and administrators in making their school safer and more secure. This easy-to-use guide includes a step-by-step plan for

- Forming an action team
- Assessing school safety and security
- Holding a forum with stakeholders to brainstorm solutions
- Developing an action plan and building support
- Evaluating the results

The toolkit includes all the materials and resources needed to develop policies and procedures related to violence prevention, positive school climate, and improved security in schools. For more information about Be Safe and Sound and to download program materials, visit www.ncpc.org/besafe. The toolkit and a letter from National PTA President Linda Hodge may also be downloaded from www.pta.org/parentinvolvement/healthsafety.

Safe School Initiative

The U.S. Secret Service and U. S. Department of Education have collaborated on a project to provide information and training to school administrators and other school staff in assessment and intervention of students who pose a risk of targeted violence in schools. This free presentation can be offered in a 3 hour or full day session. For further information, contact: Brian Busony, U.S. Secret Service, 401 N. 31st Street, Suite 600, Billings MT 59101, (406) 245-8585. Safe School Initiative findings are available at www.SecretService.Gov.

2005 Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) Registration

Registration continues for the 2005 YRBS with the deadline of November 30, 2004 fast approaching. If you need another registration packet please contact Susan Court at scourt@state.mt.us or 406- 444-3178. Administration of the 2005 YRBS will occur in February 2005; with participating school districts being able to access their own school-specific YRBS data at www.opi.state.mt.us/YRBS. Thus far, the response rate for participation in the 2005 YRBS has been quite high – "thank you" for allowing the YRBS to be such a highly successful project in Montana.

HIV/AIDS/STD Program

HIV/AIDS Upcoming Trainings

Teachers should register with Susan Court at 406-444-3178 or scourt@state.mt.us for any of the following trainings:

Boulder – November 4, HIV/AIDS Teacher Training, 9:00 a.m. – 2:30 p.m., Riverside Correctional Facility.

Billings - November 18, HIV/AIDS I Teacher Training, 8:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m., Billings Administration Building.

Missoula – November 19, HIV/AIDS Teacher Training, 8:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m., Missoula County Public Schools Administration Building.

Billings - January 20, 2005, HIV/AIDS II Teacher Training, 8:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m., Billings Administration Building.

School Nutrition Unit

Breakfast Start-up Grants now available!

School Nutrition Programs is offering school districts \$1,500 for each new school that starts a School Breakfast Program during the 2004-05 school year. If your school has been considering this program, now is a great time to start. Deadline for grant applications is November 16, 2004. For an application or more information, contact School Nutrition Programs, (406) 444-2501

Introduction to HACCP: A Plan for Serving Safe Foods in Schools

As a result of the 2004 Federal Reauthorization Act, all school nutrition programs will be required to implement a HACCP (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points) system for food safety. To help schools meet this new federal requirement, the Team Nutrition Program is offering two regional workshops. One will be held November 12, 2004 in Billings. The second will be held in the spring in Great Falls, with the date to be announced. The workshop is free. Registration is required by November 10, 2004. For more information, contact Team Nutrition Program, Attn: Debi Miller, (406) 994-5641, demiller@state.mt.us

All it Takes Nutrition \$EN\$E Toolkit

Looking for guidance on how to successfully sell and market healthful items in student stores? If so, you will want to get the “All it Takes is Nutrition \$EN\$E” Toolkit. This “Made in Montana” resource helps students encourage nutritious snacks everyday at their student stores. It is perfect for DECA clubs, FCCLA chapters, or student councils in helping successfully sell healthful items to students. The toolkit is available online at: www.opi.state.mt.us/health/index.html. Hard copies of the toolkit are available through the Team Nutrition office. For more information, contact Team Nutrition Program, Attn: Katie Bark, (406) 994-5641, kbark@state.mt.us

CHANGES IN SCHOOL NUTRITION PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

Duration of Households’ Free and Reduced-Price Meal Eligibility Determination

Beginning school year 2004-05, once approved for free or reduced-price school meal benefits households are no longer required to report changes in circumstances that occur during the school year. Formerly, households were required to report an increase in income of \$50 per month (\$600 annually); a decrease in household size; or when the household was no longer certified eligible for food stamps, Families Achieving Independence in Montana (FAIM), or Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR). Households will remain eligible for meal benefits for a maximum of 30 days after the first operating day in the subsequent school year or when a new eligibility determination is made in the subsequent school year, whichever comes first. For more information, contact School Nutrition Programs, (406) 444-2501.

Guidance for Determining Categorical Eligibility for Free Meal Benefits

Runaway youth served through grant programs established under the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (RHYA) are categorically eligible for free meals in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs. Migrant children are also categorically eligible for free meals. For more information on who to contact to verify runaway, homeless, or migrant status for children in your school, contact School Nutrition Programs, (406) 444-2501

Severe Need Breakfast Cost Record Requirement Eliminated

Beginning with school year 2004-05, schools are no longer required to maintain cost records to receive the severe need reimbursement rate for the School Breakfast Program. However, any claims outstanding from school year 2003-04 are still subject to the cost-accounting procedures for severe need assistance. Schools must have served 40 percent or more of their lunches to free or reduced-price students in the second preceding year in order to receive severe need assistance. USDA will determine how the 40 percent test is met for schools that did not serve lunches in the second preceding year and will issue further guidance on this new provision.

Looking for Funding?

OPI maintains a Scholarships or Grants section on the METNET website that provides links to organizations that provide funding related to education. The information is always changing, so be sure to check it back often. OPI Contacts: Betsy Nordell at 444-1626, or bnordell@state.mt.us or Jan Lombardi at 444-1641 or jlombardi@state.mt.us.